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JOHN N. DALTON, GOVERNOR

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COVER: Barred Owl, by Peggie Glenn, Glen Burnie, Maryland

Editorial

THE COUGAR — AN INSPIRATION

The cougar as symbol of the 1979 Wildlife Week Observance, should serve as an inspiration to those who fight to save wildlife and wild places. Long considered extinct in the Southern Appalachians, there is now more evidence than can be ignored that they are back. Even skeptical scientists concede that some of the big cats must roam remote sections of the mountains but suspect that they are transplants introduced by man. Others think that these magnificent felines somehow did the impossible and survived without man's knowledge or assistance from original stocks.

One of the explanations for the cats sudden reappearance is the restoration of southern deer herds, the white-tail being the cougar's main food supply. Deer were nearly wiped out in most southern states about the turn of the century, the same time the cougar disappeared. Like Flying Saucers and Bigfoot, stories of cougar sightings persisted through the years but beginning in the 50's enough reliable reports began coming in to get the experts wondering. By the late 60's and early 70's there were a rash of reports including tracks and hair. The evidence was convincing enough that the cougar was reclassified from extinct to endangered.

The Virginia Game Commission is currently involved in research to determine if the Eastern cougar exists in Virginia, and if so, its status. This is one of 7 research projects involving rare and endangered species.

Several avenues of approach are used simultaneously. All field personnel are alert to cougar sighting reports and each is thoroughly investigated. Scent stations are used in the suspect area to attract cougars so tracks may be preserved. If tracks are found, automatic cameras are to be employed to obtain pictures as further proof. To date 36 Virginia sightings investigated since 1970 have yielded no tangible evidence of cougars even though many witnesses were considered highly reliable. Investigators in other eastern states have found tracks and hair. Two cougars were seen in West Virginia in 1976, one of which was killed and the other captured. They were relatively tame and bore marks of cage confinement. Perhaps soon we will have a portrait of a wild cougar in Virginia.

The National Wildlife Federation in cooperation with its state affiliates is distributing 600,000 posters with the cougar's picture on them to highlight the Wildlife Week Observance March 18-24. Also some 355,000 educational kits will be sent to teachers and students.

The cougar is a terrific symbol for National Wildlife week which is designed to focus attention on problems wildlife faces. If the cougar can make it from the extinct list without our help, then we can optimistically continue our fight to save our endangered and threatened animals.

Letters

TURKEY CONTROVERSY

I found "Crisis in Turkeyland" in your December issue most informative. In order for the turkey hunters' collective voice to be better heard, I encourage membership in the Wild Turkey Federation.

Randall A. Overstreet
Stephenson

While it seems evident that more of the state is being converted to pine, actually, the opposite is true. In spite of our best efforts to replant pine where they originally grew, more and more of the pine sites in Virginia are reverting each year to hardwoods. Figures supplied by the U. S. Forest Service indicate the reversion of 1.6 million acres from pine back to hardwoods since 1957 in Virginia. The recommendation that clearcut areas be restricted to 25 acres in size would boost the cost of harvesting trees significantly.

Charles F. Finley
Executive Director
Virginia Forestry Association

PRAISE FOR BAYS

My compliments to Charles D. Bays on his article "Hunting with Sam" in the January issue. He well described the feelings of pride, love and respect that everyone who owns a devoted and intelligent field dog has for their animal. I am not quite sure, though . . . what is a "blonde setter"?

Bob Hutchinson
Centreville

DEER DRIVES

I think little of deer drives where a number of men form a line in the woods and begin yelling and walking in one direction. At the end of the drive, there are three or four men waiting for anything that comes out of the woods. I hunt, but I hunt so that I can see the beauty of the woods and its creatures. Deer drives serve no purpose. This is not a form of hunting, it is slaughter.

Dean C. Cherwek
Falls Church

PRAISE FOR VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

Recently I spent some time looking through my back issues of *Virginia Wildlife* and realized that it is one of the best wildlife publications in the country. It is not junked up with advertising or political garbage, a refreshing attribute in today's world of plastic and ever-spreading concrete.

Joseph R. McKeever, Jr.
Annandale

WORDS OF WISDOM

Well! Do they or don't they? September issue "Hawks Over Virginia", by Margy Halpin. To me the story indicates that the hawk is a migrant bird. I live in Alexandria, Virginia and I see hawks the year around. I travel to Bath County twice a month and I see them there the year around. I feel the author is talking about northern hawks only, but doesn't say so. That is very misleading to people like me, that would bet the mortgage money on the words of wisdom written in *Virginia Wildlife*.

H. E. Gallahan
Alexandria

The Phantom of River Bend Farm

Illustration by Spike Knut

In July 16, 1977, two full-grown Columbia ewes were attacked at River Bend Farm in Bath County. Only one of them was killed, but both had been wounded in a way that was to become familiar to owners of sheep along a 15-mile stretch of the Cowpasture River in Bath and Highland Counties. A hole about the size of an egg had been ripped in their windpipes.

To Karen Selwach, who is in charge of the 680 sheep at River Bend Farm, the attack was troubling and perplexing. In this mountainous area, wild dogs are the most frequent threat to sheep, but the damage to these two ewes did not look like the work of dogs, and the behavior of the other sheep was peculiarly calm. A flock that has been run by dogs is ordinarily spooked and jittery, but her ewes gave no sign of having been aware of any danger.

After examining the dead and injured ewes, Bath County Dog Warden Marvin Johnson agreed that this attack was not characteristic of feral dogs. Over the course of the next months he saw almost 40 sheep killed in the the same way, their throats punctured by fangs. He didn't know what kind of animal was killing them, but "if there was any dog in it" he said, "the dog didn't show up." Dogs usually crippled their victims by severing their hamstrings, but this predator almost invariably went for the throat. And while dogs normally mangle the sheep they kill, this predator often did nothing more than inflict its single, fatal wound. It began to seem to Johnson that it was killing "just for the sport of it." The predator seemed to work alone, and though dogs, which often run in pairs or packs, are likely to kill or maim several sheep when they get into a flock, its habit was to kill only one sheep a night. Like Miss Selwach, Johnson noted that the other sheep did not appear to be disturbed by the strikes. Whatever this creature was, it was the "smoothest-working thing" Johnson had ever come up against.

For several weeks the predator confined its attacks to River Bend Farm and to the farm of Dallas Williams, a few miles south on the Cowpasture. Its raids were nocturnal; it came into a flock at night while the sheep were bedded down, and it killed and departed without making any fuss and without leaving a trace — except for its victims. At both farms the sheep were guarded at night, but Mr. Williams would remain with his flock until three or four in the morning — and find a slain lamb when he checked again at daybreak. "That thing was watching me," he says. He penned his flock, but this predator was as bold as it was smart; Miss Selwach penned her flock too, and one of her lambs was attacked in the barn lot. It got so that she could almost predict the nights when it would strike, but there didn't seem to be any way to stop it.

A trapper for the rabies control program was working in the region, and at the request of Warden Johnson and Miss Selwach, he made sets both at River Bend and at Mr. William's farm. The traps were no more a deterrent than the guards and armed patrols had been.

BY STEPHEN GOODWIN

The attacks continued, and a sheep was killed within 50 yards of a trap. Finally, after ten sheep had been killed at River Bend and after Mr. Williams had lost ten lambs and a ewe from a flock of only 30 ewes, Mr. Williams began to close his sheep in a barn at night and Miss Selwach moved hers into a lighted area.

Meanwhile, of course, rumors and speculations increased. It was thought, still, that this killer might be a feral dog. Some claimed that it was a bear, a mountain lion, or even an eagle. One man at River Bend had glimpsed a large, reddish animal with a bushy tail, but he saw it at dusk and it was across the river. Because last summer's drought had left the ground so dry and hard, tracking was virtually impossible. Dogs had once followed a scent from the Williams farm into the rocky cliffs nearby, but the trail ended at the entrance to a cave. The rugged, forested slopes of Shenandoah Mountain rise east of the Cowpasture, and they provide plenty of cover. A full-grown doe, killed just as the sheep had been, was found near River Bend Farm, and it confirmed the opinion that this predator was more stealthy, powerful, savage, and deadly than any animal native to these parts.

Before they were set, however, they were carefully prepared. To remove the scent from the traps, Mr. Alt cooked them in ashes and then soaked them for 48 hours in the river. Along with them he soaked his boots and a pair of rubberized gloves. When the traps were taken from the river they were boiled again in a solution of logwood extract, an imported product that is both a dye and rust-inhibitor. The traps, handled only with the rubberized gloves, were then packed in pine needles, as were Mr. Alt's boots; he didn't wear them except when he walked from his car to check his traps. Mr. Alt knew that this animal was used to ordinary amounts of human scent, but he also knew that it was vital not to arouse its suspicions in any way. When something's wrong, he said, an animal as cagey as this one "doesn't sit down to figure out what it is—he takes off."

Mr. Alt was aware of some of the methods that had already been used unsuccessfully to catch the predator, and he set his three traps at River Bend Farm in three different ways. Near one of them he used a special scent as a lure, though he was not optimistic; it is standard practice to bait traps with scent, and Mr. Alt guessed

The Phantom of River Bend Farm killed sheep and cattle with abandon, coming and going through Bath County like a ghost.

After two weeks without results, the state trapper left the region, but enclosing the sheep at night did seem to discourage the predator. It moved upriver and killed livestock on farms farther north on the Cowpasture. By now Warden Johnson suspected that this was the same animal that had been responsible for livestock killings during the spring and early summer in Rockbridge and Augusta Counties. There, too, it had eluded the efforts of trappers, and Johnson was baffled about how to put a stop to the mounting depredations.

He appealed to a resident of Highland County, Glavis Alt. Several people had mentioned Mr. Alt as the man who'd catch the animal if anyone could, and Miss Selwach, on her own, had asked Mr. Alt to set traps at River Bend Farm. Since he and his wife have a flock of their own, Mr. Alt was sympathetic to the plight of sheep owners, but he was somewhat reluctant to go after it when so many previous efforts had failed. He knew that this predator, wily to begin with, was educated by now, or "trap-wise," as the previous trapper at River Bend had concluded. But even if Mr. Alt had his doubts, other local trappers had complete faith in him. When he agreed to put out his traps, one of them said that the predator had "better pack its suitcase and leave, or it's going to wake up one morning in a steel bracelet."

Mr. Alt didn't know exactly what kind of animal he was after, but having seen one of its victims, he was sure that it was a member of the dog family. Not long after he'd committed himself to pursuing it, he was able to track it from one of its kills; it had a dog's paw. Mr. Alt decided to set heavy traps, No. 4 longsprings, which he normally uses for beaver. They are powerful enough to hold a wolf or coyote.

that this animal "had already smelled everything that came out of a bottle." Another was baited with a polecat tail; Mr. Alt thought his quarry might try to dig it up. The third was set blind, right out in the open with no lure at all. A little fresh dirt was dug up to cover the trap so that it would appear that another animal had buried something there. A blind set must be placed in the open; otherwise the quarry, fearing that he is under observation, might be put on its alert and avoid it. All three traps were set in a field along the river through which the predator would have to pass to get to the sheep, for Miss Selwach, co-operating with Mr. Alt, had moved her flock into the adjoining fields.

On the night of Wednesday, September 28, the first night the traps were out, three lambs were crippled at the Charles McCormick farm, eight miles upriver. Mr. Alt did not move his traps, but the following night he and Mr. McCormick, both armed, sat up late waiting for the predator to return. There was a bit of a moon that night, and the McCormick farm is adjacent to the Coursey Springs hatchery, where the trout-rearing pens are well-lighted. At two o'clock there was a commotion among the sheep, and a few moments later Mr. Alt saw for the first time what he was after. It had evidently been chasing a calf, not a sheep, and there was enough light for him to make out its considerable size, its color, and a pair of erect, pointed ears. But it was too far away to shoot, and it was gone in a jiffy.

On Friday night Mr. Alt was again at the McCormick farm, but the animal did not return. He left his traps at River Bend Farm, where he had already caught two foxes. Miss Selwach and the others at the farm had penned their dogs to keep them away from the traps, as Mr. Alt had requested, but on Sunday morning,

October 2, when she went to feed the sheep, Miss Selwach feared that one of the dogs had got loose. She hadn't heard any barking, and she didn't know exactly where Mr. Alt's traps were set, but as she scanned the fields to make sure that no sheep were down, a movement caught her eye. The animal she saw was the same reddish color as one of the farm dogs.

It was not a farm dog, she realized. She didn't know what it was. It was caught in one of the traps and it was lunging against the chain to free itself. She ran back to ther house, phoned Mr. Alt, and returned to the field with a shotgun.

The animal never made a sound. It simply faced away from Miss Selwach when she approached, turning now and then to glance over its shoulder as it pulled against the trap chain. She didn't know what it was, but she had no doubt that it was the animal that had slain her sheep, and she was prepared to use the shotgun to keep it from escaping. When Mr. Alt reached the field he killed it with two shots from a .22 rifle.

It had been caught in the blind set, and since it had sprinkled that night Mr. Alt was able to track it from the river. It had entered the field, made a complete circle around a fox caught in another trap — which might have been empty at the time — and crossed the field in a line which took it within 15 feet of the blind set. There it turned at a right angle and walked right into the trap. Those who saw it that morning thought it resembled a red wolf more than any other animal in the illustrated book at River Bend Farm. Mr. Alt had never seen either a wolf or a coyote, but he had read carefully about both of them in the trapping magazines, *Fur — Fish — Game* and *The Trapper*, and he thought that its behavior was more nearly that of a wolf than of a coyote. While a coyote will customarily bark and howl in a trap, this animal had never uttered a sound, and instead of tucking its tail between its legs, as a coyote would when approached, it had carried its tail extended behind it.

The animal, a male, stood 28" at the shoulder and measured 54" in length. When first put on the scales it weighed 45 pounds. It was powerful enough to have straightened some of the links of the trap chain by pulling against them. Its stout forequarters and big brisket, Mr. Alt noted, were heavier than those of the western coyote, and its muzzle was broader and blunter than the sharp peaked nose of the coyote. This animal measured 1-3/8 inches across the muzzle; the snout of the western coyote is not more than an inch wide. But the animal wasn't identified until then Supervising Game Biologist Jack Raybourne arrived at the Coursey Springs Fish Hatchery, where it had been taken and where it had attracted a large crowd. Raybourne conjectured that it was a coy-dog, a cross between a coyote and a wild dog.

Raybourne's identification was tentative, however. Coyotes and dogs are members of the same genus, and they will mate; the heavy build of this animal and its reddish coloration pointed to some sort of cross rather than a full-fledged coyote. Raybourne performed an autopsy of the animal and found the remains of a calf in it, but he planned, before venturing a positive identification, to send the skull to the Smithsonian Institute for analysis.

When Raybourne got the skull from the taxidermist — Miss Selwach had taken it to be mounted and presented to Mr. Alt — he judged it to be too damaged for purposes of identification. A Smithsonian mammologist, Dr. Michael Bogan, who has examined the skulls of similar animals, said that without the skull conclusive identification was impossible. Animals of this type may range from dog-coyote crosses to pure coyotes to crosses between wolves and coyotes. One prevailing opinion, Dr. Bogan stated, is that the robust appearance of the so-called eastern coyote is explained by the introgression of wolf genes. While coyotes will mate with dogs, their reproductive biology is different enough to have raised doubts among researchers about the vigor of the coy-dog hybrid. The wolf-coyote cross, however, is thought to produce a hardy animal, slightly larger and more powerful than the western coyote.

It seems, then, quite possible that the animal trapped by Mr. Alt was a specimen of eastern coyote, that is, a coyote with some admixture of wolf. Game Biologist Raybourne says that "for all practical purposes, it's a coyote." Like Dr. Bogan, he noted that these animals have appeared with increasing frequency in eastern states. The coyote has not only bred successfully with other members of its genus but it has also been successful in its eastward migration.

That coyote probably received as much publicity last year as any other single animal in Virginia. Some of the newspaper accounts, of course, were speculative and erroneous. It was not caught "purely by accident," as a Richmond paper reported; if it was an accident, Mr. Alt wondered when he read that account, why didn't some other trapper have an accident? Furthermore, the ambiguity about its identification persists. It has been the subject of deliberations of the Bath County Board of Supervisors and of the Claims Committee of the General Assembly. Virginia law provides for payment from county funds for livestock losses caused by dogs, but Bath County officials ruled that it was not a dog. Delegate Shad Solomon, on behalf of Bath County farmers seeking compensation for livestock valued at $1500, appealed to the Claims Committee — which ruled that it was a dog.

The farmers have now been compensated and the depredations have stopped. "Fortunately," Jack Raybourne said, "Glavis Alt was in the area." One eastern coyote met his match.

Glavis Alt was finally successful in capturing the "phantom".

SCHOOL'S END

BY CHARLES D. BAYS

"Fish on!"

For a brief moment, I thought the exuberant angler to be unusually proud of the obviously heavy fish he had just hooked. The flurry of action which followed, however, made me glad I had kept the thought to myself.

Immediately upon hearing this locally accepted signal, anglers on either side of the productive fisherman frantically cranked their heavy spinning reels to avoid the possibility of tangled lines and a lost fish.

The great silver fish grudgingly gave ground and after a tackle testing but relatively short battle, the 10 pound plus striped bass was safely in an accommodating net. Only now did a broad grin replace the clinched teeth look of determination on the happy angler's face.

The scene was at the base of Leesville Dam on the Staunton (Roanoke) River. Each spring, usually beginning in April and continuing until the first part of June, huge schools of striped bass relentlessly push their way upstream from Kerr Reservoir to fulfill the inexorable act of procreation. Nothing can deter their journey up the river as they move purposefully along to spawn. Nothing, that is, except a formidable mass of concrete known as Leesville Dam.

This structure denies the anadromous fish further upstream passage, leaving large numbers of stripers milling about in the pools below. During the course of the spring run, the dam necessitates the stopping point for thousands of striped bass; here the school's upstream journey ends.

As one might already have guessed, this is also a gathering spot for appreciable numbers of striped bass fishermen. I've got to admit on my initial trip there with two of my Roanoke cronies, Jerry Lamb and Henry Wolfe, I was more than a bit skeptical of this type of fishing.

The hole of water immediately below the dam was ringed with enthusiastic fishermen and took on the appearance of opening day of trout season. I had already imagined what would happen once a bulldog-like striped bass was hooked and could envision a ratnest of tangled monofilament and flared tempers. As indicated at the start of this story, I was quickly proven wrong. The fishermen at Leesville proved to be a congenial lot who seemed to enjoy socializing almost as much as catching fish.

Basically, there are two methods of fishing for stripers at Leesville. The first and most preferred method is using live bait.

Shad, which are abundant in the river, can be easily obtained along the rocky shoreline below the dam. Some local fishermen have constructed crude depressions in the rocks which confine the shad for easy netting. Periodically, following a warning whistle, water is released through gates in the dam, causing a rapid rise in the river below. Fishermen must heed these warnings to avoid being swept away by the

An obviously happy angler with her catch. stripers of this size are common at the base of the dam.

swift currents. These usually occur each hour on the hour, although there are exceptions. After the gates are closed (usually in 10 minutes or so), the water quickly recedes, leaving numbers of shad stranded in these depressions where they may easily be dipped or even caught with the hands.

Dipping bait from the river has been a controversial issue for several seasons. A recent change in regulations allows dipping bait fishes while standing on the bank above the water line using a net not over 20 inches in diameter with a handle not over 8 feet in length. Wading in the river while dipping is strictly prohibited.

Most anglers at Leesville rig a half ounce slip sinker above a 3/0 hook. A BB split shot six to eight inches above the hook will keep the slip sinker away from the bait. Heavy spinning reels and long rods are preferred by most anglers, although a variety of less conventional gear is sometimes used. One young lady there was successful in landing a good sized striper on a Zebco 202 loaded with 8 pound test line.

Fishermen able to do so try to cast their live bait to within a few yards of a concrete wall which protrudes out into the water perhaps midway across the river. After the bait settles to the bottom fishing becomes a waiting game. Close scrutiny of the line is recommended, as even a large striper will at times hit quite easily. The next strike may be vicious.

After the fish is hooked, every effort should be made to horse him off the bottom to avoid the possibility of cut or entangled line as the bottom of the river is extremely rocky. Take along a healthy supply of replacement tackle.

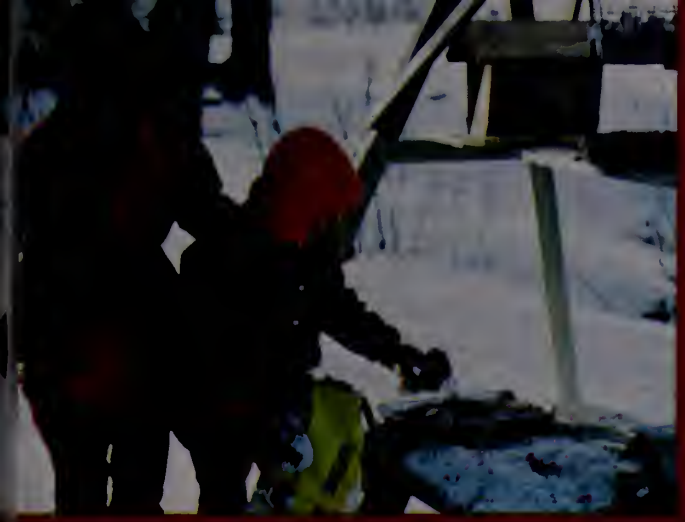
Leesville Dam provides good striper fishing for both the lazy and the adventuresome fisherman.

A Virginia Game Warden watches as anglers prepare to fish during a period of power generation.

The second method of fishing for stripers at Leesville Dam is for the adventuresome, and the nimble footed. As the vast flow of water is being released from the dam the artifical enthusiasts cast heavy bucktail jigs directly into the current, holding their rods high over their heads. If a strike does not occur by the time the jig is washed parallel to the bank, it is cranked in and re-cast.

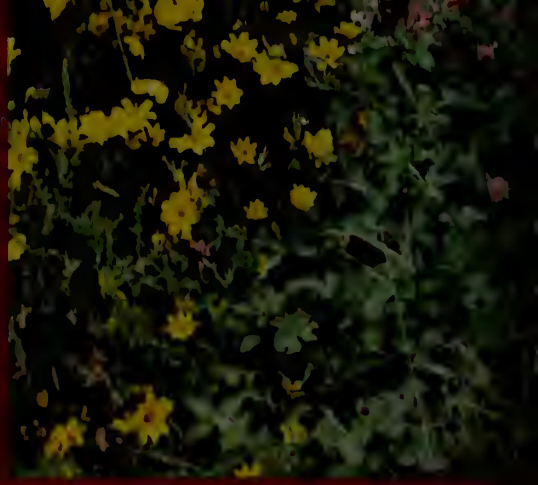
If a fish is hooked it's a footrace downstream. Aided by the force of the current, the fisherman can do little but reluctantly follow the striper downstream and hope for the fish to tire. As often as not, a chagrined expression and broken line are the end results, although some trophy fish have been landed using this method.

Fishing for striped bass at the base of Leesville Dam may hold little appeal for the angler in search of solitude. Instead, it may be more likened to the social event that trout fishing has become. However, a day's fishing at Leesville is usually not without its rewards and offers even the novice angler the chance to land a trophy sized fish.



Living with Wildlife

BY EARLY H. [illegible]



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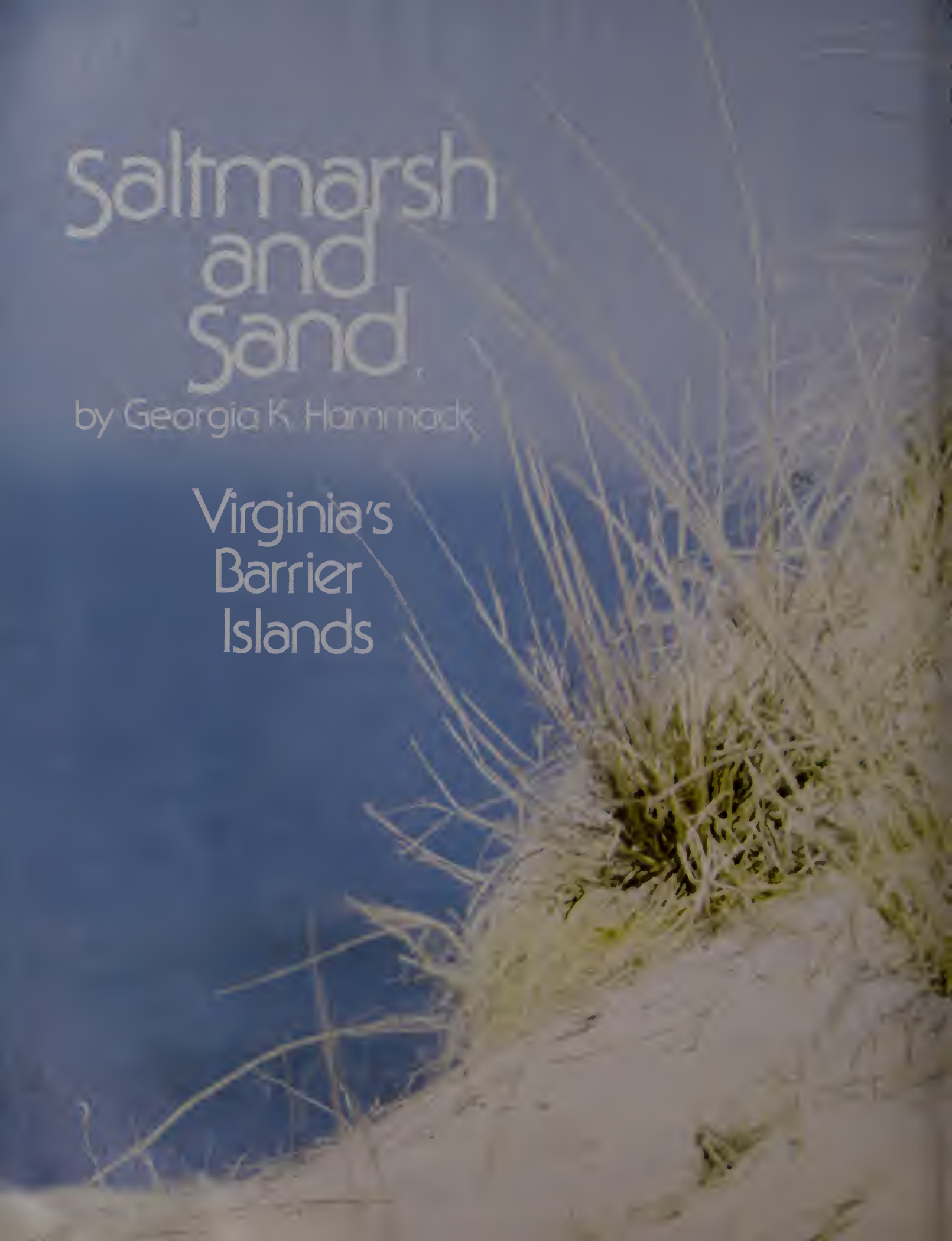
Saltmarsh and Sand

by Georgia K. Hammock

Virginia's Barrier Islands



We had been warned about the mosquitoes on the barrier islands.

But on the Coast Guard boat that took us from Wachapreague to Parramore Island on a shining October morning, we decided we wouldn't put on sticky insect repellent until we saw the whites of the mosquitoes' eyes.

As it turned out, the wind or the climate was such that mosquitoes were hardly in evidence.

Other members of our party, on a trip sponsored by the Conservation Council of Virginia, said they had been on the islands when mosquitoes would descend like a cloak on their faces and hands.

This is but one indication of the islands' hostility to man. Other indications are constantly changing shores, high winds and tides.

But we were there, as members of the Conservation Council, to rejoice in man's withdrawal from the islands and to enjoy the dominion of the wind and the waves.

Thirteen barrier islands now constitute the Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve — in all, a 45 mile stretch along the Atlantic side of the Eastern Shore. Nearly 35,000 acres of sandy beaches and salt marshes, they are the finest examples of undisturbed barrier islands remaining in our country.

Efforts by the Nature Conservancy to acquire the islands began in 1967. The Conservancy is a nationwide, private, non-profit organization that purchases in order to preserve in a natural state valuable natural areas throughout the country. When acquisition of the barrier islands began, plans were in the offing for the development of three of them into a giant luxury recreation and retirement center. Such encroachment would have harmed or destroyed the islands's natural functions.

The islands — as they are — are extremely important ecologically (and economically) because their salt marshes yield organic matter vital to the sea food industry. Biologists have estimated "that the marshlands linking the barrier islands to the mainland are among the richest and most productive in the world." Further, "the marshes provide pollution control by treating and assimilating nutrient wastes such as phosphorous. They act as large 'sponges', absorbing great amounts of water, and aiding in flood control. They serve as a buffer against storms, thereby protecting the mainland."

A 45 mile stretch of undisturbed barrier island makes up The Nature Conservancy's Virginia coast reserve.

These quotes are from a brochure *Save the Islands* giving information about the Reserve. The Conservancy accepts contributions for the continuing costs of preservation and maintainance. The Reserve has a manager, Rod Hennessy, a capable, well qualified young man who, on our trip anyway, had a friendly way of saying "Ahoy, mates."

The Reserve is making plans to offer organized tours of the islands in the future.

Limited day use of many portions of the islands is already permitted. Inquiries can be made to: Virginia Coast Reserve, Box 202, Wachapreague, Va., 23480. Allowed activities include nature study, hiking, beach combing, swimming, surf fishing, photography, and limited waterfowl hunting (if prior arrangements are made.) Hunters are required to use steel shot and can hunt only in low saltmarsh areas of the reserve.

Photo by Mel White

Also, scientific research is allowed, after acceptance of a written proposal including a precise definition of methods and objectives. The potential for scientific research on the reserve is tremendous.

You don't have to be an enthusiastic lover of the ocean (and the three members of our family on the Conservation Council trip are all professed landlubbers) to enjoy the naturalness and wilderness experience. The beaches are wide and free. The wild birds seem to be the owner of the wind and the waves and the marshes. In the interior, over sand dunes and past low grassy areas, are thick, at times inpenetrable, thickets of shrub and small tree growth. Sometimes, closer to shore, amid the sand, will be a surviving, stunted tree, — a reminder that the buffeting sea is constantly shifting the shore, bringing shoreward what was once inland, and vice versa.

Although we were there when many nesting birds had left and many migratory birds not yet arrived, we saw birds in number and variety enough to appreciate the island's fame for bird concentrations. One contented looking gentleman in our group went off by himself with a telescope over his shoulder after first pointing out "Myrtle warbler!" where I had seen only a quiver of leaves in a spice myrtle thicket. We saw the ubiquitous gulls, large and solemn; graceful snowy egrets; geese wavering and fluctuating in their V formations, and little long legged shore birds (black skimmers, I think). When these took off in a group and hovered over the waves, the crossing black and white of their wings made them look like cross stitch embroidery.

We were told that species to be seen include common and red-throated loon, horned and pied-billed grebe, double-crested cormorant, snow geese, Atlantic brant, black duck, various egrets and herons, glossy ibis, American oyster-catcher, Wilson's plover, avocet, whimbrel, marbled godwit, willet, various sandpipers, and numerous gulls and terns. Ten species of hawks find refuge on the islands, including the rare and endangered peregrine falcon, the imperiled pigeon hawk or merlin, and the vanishing osprey.

We had a knowledgeable guide who identified the crabs that scuttled ahead of us across the sand, and told us about the shells that we picked up. We brought some of the shells home although they are never as beautiful later as when you first see them, still holding sea water or lying strewn about the sand.

The sun and wind drenched hours we spent that day on Parramore, the largest of the islands, went very quickly.

When we came in, reluctantly, in our small crafts, to the dock at Wachapreague, an old salt, to the amusement of his cronies, regaled us with harrowing tales of the sea.

Headquarters for the Conservation Council meeting had been the old Wachapreague Inn, right at the dock, and looking, with its wooden porches around all four stories, rather like a giant ferryboat that had washed ashore.

The dining room's opening hour of 5:30 a.m. testified to the fact that it caters to deep sea fishermen. A modern motel is also connected with the Inn, and camping facilities and other motels and restaurants are sprinkled throughout the area. Wachapreague is about midway in the Virginia portion of the Eastern Shore.

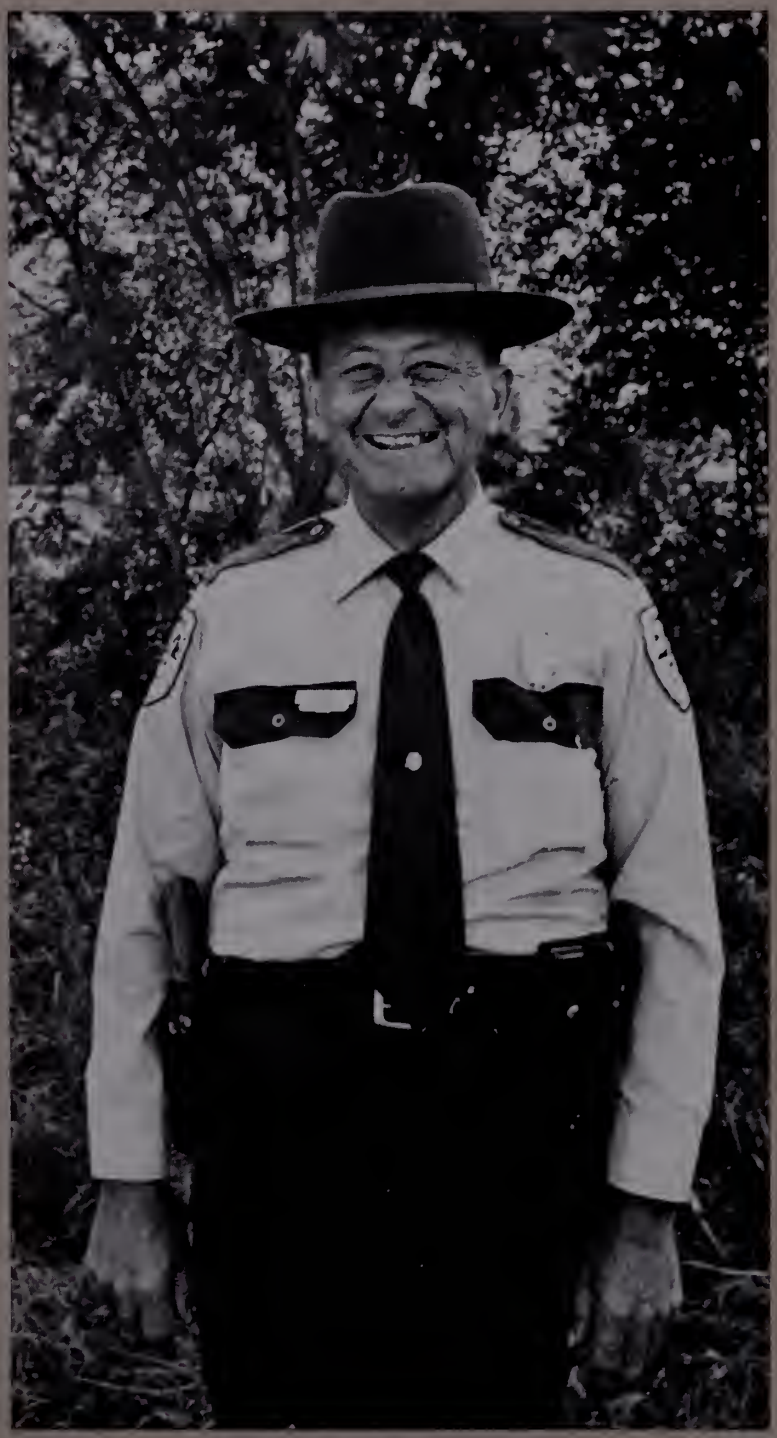
The common egret *Photo by Leon Kesteloo*

We took time to drive about thirty miles north from Wachapreague to Assateague Island, owned by the federal government and connected by bridge with the mainland. We had hoped to see the island's famous wild ponies, but those we saw were skinny and dejected looking, holding up traffic and reminding one of the bears one sees in mountain parks, looking for handouts.

However, since we had already enjoyed so much wildness at Parramore, we didn't go beyond Assateague's recreation area into its wildlife refuge. Maybe there, the ponies are "wilder".

But if it's the wildness of a remote beach and marsh environment, far from cars and casinos, that you'd like to encounter, it would be well to look into a visit to the fabled barrier islands of the Virginia Coast Reserve.

E. TYLER RASNIC



Tyler Rasnic was born in the Wallen Creek Community of Lee County where his father was a tobacco and cattle farmer. He was one of twelve children, seven boys and five girls. Although his father fished as well as hunted, the latter activity was his favorite. When Tyler was about five years of age he used to trail along with his father on squirrel hunting expeditions. The other children were also interested in the outdoors and the family shared many memorable experiences over the years.

Tyler graduated from Jonesville High after attending Stickleyville Jr. High during the three previous years. Following that he attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute where, in 1942, he was awarded a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agronomy. For about six months he worked as a soil technician at the Agriculture Experiment Station in Norfolk. December of that same year found him enlisting in the United States Navy's V-7 Program and he was assigned to the Midshipman's School at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana.

Commissioned as Ensign, he then served with the Amphibious Forces in the Florida Island training boat crews in assault landings. His next assignment was to the Assault Transport APH *Pinkney* which had evacuation missions in the South Pacific. The ship and Tyler, who was by then a Boat Group Commander, were involved in the Iwo Jima, Leyte, Peleliu, Luzon, Okinawa and Hollandia Campaigns. During the latter action the *Pinkney* was hit by a Kamikaze plane carrying a 1000 lb. bomb. Forty-four men were killed during the attack.

Rasnic was released from active duty as a Lieutenant in December of 1945 and soon learned of an opening with the Game Commission. He applied and was hired as a Game Warden assigned to Lee County, Virginia. Currently he has responsibilities in Lee, Dickenson and Wise Counties.

Some of the most gratifying aspects of his work have been the opportunities to work with young people and conservation groups. He was involved in the first trout and turkey stocking in Lee County and witnessed the sportsmen enjoying the first ever seasons for trout, deer and turkey in that area.

His wife is the former Patricia Horton from Lee County. The couple has three sons all of whom have now graduated from college. Tyler and Patricia make their home in Jonesville, Virginia which is the county seat of Lee County.

Smith River Browns

BY WILLIAM H. PARSONS

When someone mentions brown trout in [illegible] toward the Smith River. I suppose my [illegible] fishing in the state. In fact, I believe the Smith River offers some of the best [illegible] on the East Coast. Forty-five degree water rushes out from beneath the [illegible] hundred feet down, becomes well oxygenated enough to carry a massive population of [illegible] trout. Threadfin shad make up a large segment of food for the browns at the base of the dam. Some browns are said to be well over ten pounds in the settling pool below the spillway. Mayfly hatches appear throughout the year, and tiny minnows inhabit the river throughout its course. Hellgrammites have popped up here and there, probably from import as a fish lure for they are not native to the river. The lower trout territory runs through Bassett and holds some of the largest trout despite the fact that it is polluted. According to many anglers, the disposal of waste supplies an ample food supply for tiny foragers, and the foragers amply supply the trout.

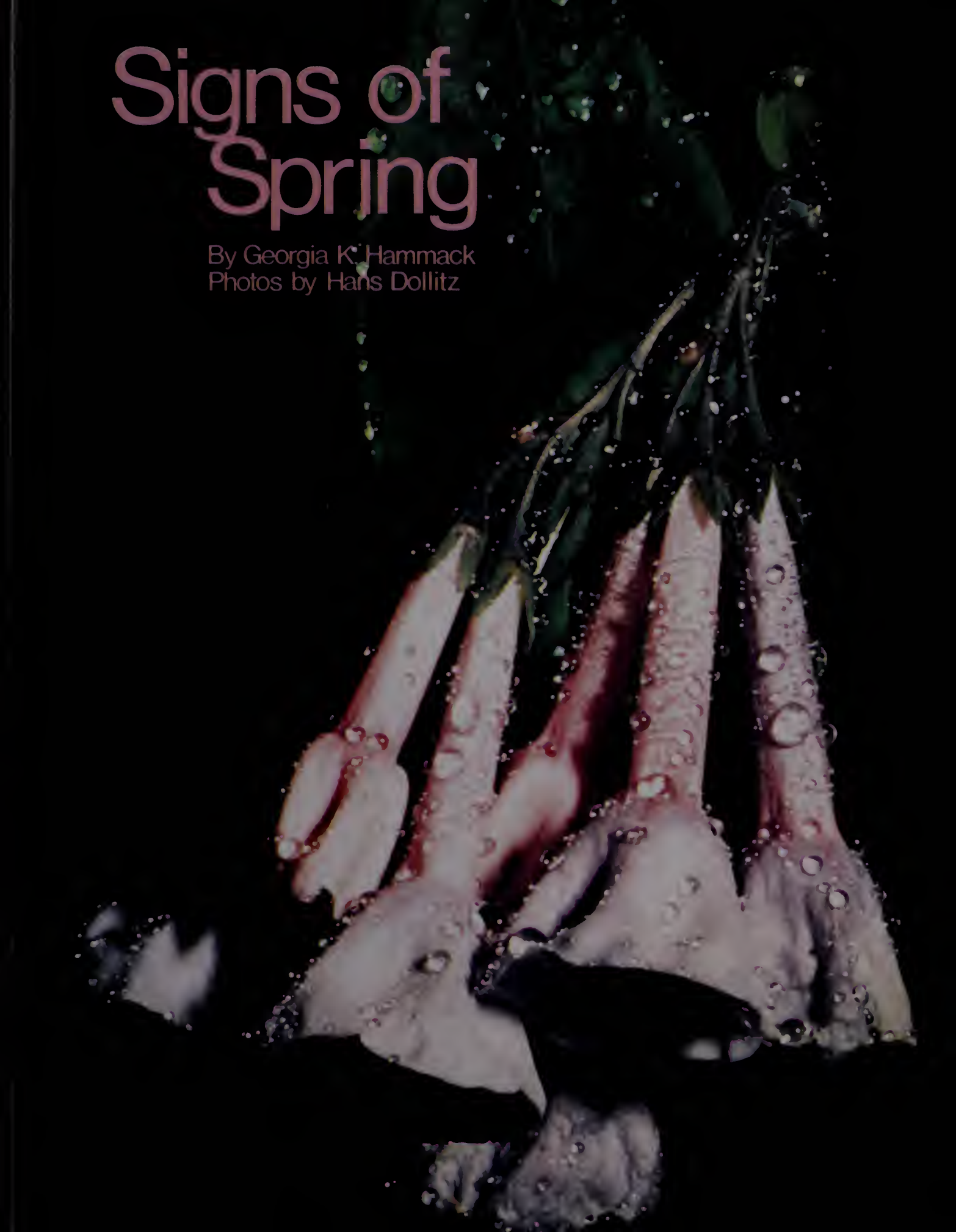
The Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries with the help of the Smith River Chapter of Trout Unlimited set aside a portion of the river under special regulations. TU believed the river should be protected and its delicate natural balance secured. The area they picked is isolated, can support trout reproduction and is clean. Browns can reproduce in this area and move up or downstream, supplying fish for the entire coldwater section. A large supply of breeder fish are left in the river, and hatchery trout wander into this section and remain in the river to provide additional sport. The regulations are simple. Only artificials with single barbless hooks are allowed, and only one trout over twelve inches in length may be taken per day. The special regulations area may be reached by going to North Bassett via Route 57 and taking Route 666, then by taking Route 674 to Philpott Community. The special regulations area may be seen downstream from the bridge crossing the Smith River at Philpott Community. A large sign crossing the river slightly below the bridge defines the regulations and designates the section.

Flyfishing is fantastic on the river year-round. The best two dry flies for this water are the Light Cahill and Irresistible. Zug Bugs and Tellicos are good nymphs. The Muddler Minnow is said to be the best bet for catching large browns on the river. Sizes run from twelve to fourteen. Leader tippets should run from 6X to 7X. A good weight-forward number five or double-tapered number six should do the trick and your reel should have plenty of backing.

When on the river, be careful because of the water fluctuations right before power generation at the dam. I usually call the Resource Management Office at the dam before going fishing to get generation times. The number is (703) 629-2703. It takes an hour for the water to drop after the gates are lowered at the dam in the special regulations area.

Signs of Spring

By Georgia K. Hammack
Photos by Hans Dollitz



Virginia bluebells (preceding page), the monarch larva (above) and amanita muscaria (right) are all signs that spring has arrived.

"Seen any skunk cabbage this year?" our piano tuner asked companionably the other day, as he pulled out our piano bench and opened his tool chest to start to work.

As far as we're concerned, a sign of spring is the arrival of our piano tuner. He shows up each year about the time hepatica is blooming in the woods.

Further, he's an authority on wildflowers.

As it happens, skunk cabbage is a wildflower I've always heard about, but never, to my knowledge, seen (or smelled?).

They're about six inches high, "Mr. H. J. Dollitz said, striking a note. "Shaped sort of like a squirrel's tail. Beautiful, too, They are dark-orangy-red, almost like the wood of this piano. With yellow spots."

They sound so exotic I don't know how I've missed them. I immediately wanted to go out and look.

"They like marshy places, "Mr. Dollitz said. "You should be able to find them from mid-February all through March. And the inside stalk of the skunk cabbage, if you crush it, does smell faintly like a skunk."

This is the sort of thing I'm always finding out when we get the piano tuned. No one in our house plays the piano very much any more, unfortunately, but we try to keep the piano in shape anyway, and I'm beginning to feel, too, that Mr. Dollitz's visits are a necessity if I'm going to keep on my toes about wildflowers.

Mr. Dollitz, who has been tuning pianos within a 100 mile radius of Richmond for some years now for Walter D. Moses Company, is a piano technician; which means he's qualified to restring and repair the instrument, as well as tune it. He and his family all enjoy music. His wife teaches classical guitar at VCU and has a weekly radio program. His daughter plays the oboe. Mr. Dollitz likes playing the piano, but says all the traveling he has to do doesn't leave much time for adequate practices.

Traveling, though, does fit in, to some extent, with his interest in wildflowers. He takes his camera with him, and he photographs flowers when he gets a chance. In previous years, we've been able to direct him to flowers in our woods he wanted to photograph. This time he wanted to come back the next day to look for, and photograph, skunk cabbage — but it rained.

In Richmond, he has taken photographs of wildflowers at James River Park. "There are about 350 species there — all around. But most people don't see them. They look up — not down. "He's made slides of lady's slippers there — his favorite wildflower, he says — dwarf iris, bloodroot, trout lily, and many more. "It's release, "he says," escape, fascination, and interest."

He belongs to a camera club in Richmond that specializes in nature photography. He has entered his pictures in competitions, salons, and exhibits (both here and abroad) and has won a number of certificates.

I always enjoy looking at the photographs he brings on each trip. This year, I especially liked one of a praying mantis and a bumblebee — in the same picture. It looked like summer. And there was one of a bloodroot blossom with rain drops on it.

I hope he gets a good picture of a skunk cabbage.

Tomorrow, I'm going to look for skunk cabbage myself.

Crazy Grouse

BY AL SHIMMEL

My neighbor walked across the breezeway that separated his kitchen from the garage. He selected the tools needed to make some minor repair, then turned to leave. A flicker of movement caught his attention. Looking up he saw a grouse perched on a rafter, eying him curiously. He moved closer. The grouse made no effort to escape. A window on the wood-ward side of the garage had a softball-sized opening from which radiated innumerable lines of cracked glass. His wife and son-in-law joined him and together they speculated. Meanwhile the grouse eyed them with apparent unconcern. They concluded that the bird had been dazed by its contact with the glass or had perhaps sustained serious injury.

The younger man brought a stepladder and reached the bird. Careful examination revealed no apparent injury. It was taken outside and released. A few loose feathers drifted down to mark its departure.

Old Charley, who half a century ago took a raw country kid and did his best to make him into an enthusiastic grouse hunter and sportsman, expressed this opinion of the bird's departure.

"About the time you decide the grouse is about the smartest bird alive it pulls some fool stunt that dumps all your thinking into the swill barrel. You just can't depend on them! A man who thinks he knows all about them is a candidate for the 'funny farm.' "

During the autumn, grouse indulge in wild spectacular flights that carry them into some very unusual places. They have found their way into the very heart of cities, into suburban gardens, open pastures devoid of cover, and even into farmer's barnyards. Some scientists theorize that this is a remnant of the migration urge that serves the purpose of scattering the family groups and thus prevents inbreeding that might cause a deterioration of the species.

The grouse shares with the wild turkey the distinction of being a species that has survived with little physical change through 25 thousand years of time. Remains have been recovered from the Cumberland Cave in Maryland, the Potter Cave in California, the Frankstown Cave in Pennsylvania, a cave in Tennessee and the fissure beds of Arkansas. In spite of its idiosyncracies, it has managed to survive most of its contemporaries of the Plesistocene Period.

The wildness of the grouse is traditional in areas where it is widely and consistently hunted, yet an occasional bird is so tame at times that it deserves the name that was applied by the early settlers when they first came in contact with this bird. They called it "Fool Hen" and considered it game for young boys with clubs or a noose attached to a long rod.

Two of my early experiences were with birds that apparently lacked a sense of fear. As a country boy, I was accustomed to providing my own recreation. Like most small boys I manufactured crude bows and arrows. With this armament I prowled the woods and pastures doing little damage except to spread terror among the chipmunks and red squirrels. One autumn morning when the demands of appetite sent me home-

ward, I flushed a grouse from the alders beside the spring brook that watered the pasture. It simply flew a few yards and perched in the forks of a scraggly pine not more than a dozen yards from where I stood. The bow sent the arrow, made from the steel rib of a wagon umbrella, through the bird's breast. It fell flopping to the ground where I quickly secured it. Young savage that I was, I bore it home in triumph and received the acclaim of the family.

A few years later I was returning home from a visit to a friend that lived beyond the hill. My path bordered a buckwheat field which had not been harvested, although it was fully ripe. Near the top of the hill an even dozen grouse flew up from the grain and perched in a tree ahead. Here they sat, craning their necks and refusing to fly even when I stood directly under their perch. Only when I threw a stick into their tree did they fly and then across the corner of the field to the edge of the woods. Two weeks later when the season opened I returned to find them so wild that I did not get a single shot.

A few years ago during the gunning season, I left the gun in the rack and carried a camera instead. There were two inches of new snow so that birds were easy to locate. I hoped to get a picture of a grouse on the ground. I flushed three individuals but failed to get a single picture. A warm spring melted a patch of snow and nourished a bit of green. I found a track leading in that direction and followed with all the woodcraft I could muster. The bird flushed in spite of my best effort. It flew only about 100 feet and perched in a pine tree. I walked slowly. At 20 feet I took a picture. It did not move. I came closer. When I was directly under the bird I took several pictures. The range finder read 11 feet. Surely the bird was ill or hurt, I thought. I clapped my hands sharply. The bird exploded into flight and disappeared.

One night while following the hounds I was pushing through a thicket. The miner's lamp that I wore on my cap cast grotesque shadows as I fought my way through the interlaced branches. Suddenly I came to a small opening. On an overhanging branch just above my head perched two grouse. Cautiously I reached up and grasped their legs. The pair were made captive with the same ease that sleepy chickens could be plucked from the hen roost. I carried them home in my spacious game pocket and the next morning released them in coverts nearer home.

Perhaps the strangest experience to come to my attention was related by a hunting partner. One of the areas where we go to check the rattlesnake population each spring has a number of nesting grouse. On this particular day I had other commitments and could not accompany him. My friend persuaded his brother to go. With some reluctance he agreed, although his lack of enthusiasm was apparent. On reaching their destination they parked their car. At the slight noise made by closing the car door, a grouse came running to the side of the road, showing every sign of belligerence. When they advanced toward the bird, it retreated, but when they turned away it ran toward them. They teased the bird for some time, then turned again to enter the woods. Again the bird followed. My friend took off his hat and threw it at the bird. It retreated. He turned and again walked away. He had only made a few steps when he was startled by a sharp pinch just below his hip pocket. The bird had actually jumped up and pecked at his trousers to hasten his retreat. We went back the following day, hoping for a repeat performance that we could record on film but the bird could not be found.

Last spring a naturalist of my acquaintance found a grouse nesting in a suburban garden over a mile from the nearest woods. In the next lot a house was being built. The hen brought off her brood within a few yards of the confusion. The 11 eggs all hatched and the chicks were led away.

James Sprunt writes about Clarence and Sarah Fitzwater's grouse who arrived in the farmyard one day looking for a handout and stayed long enough to gain the name "Nuisance." The grouse became a daily visitor to the Fitzwater's yard and in short order was on friendly terms with everyone including a large yellow cat named Tiger.

Not to be left out of the family activities, Nuisance took up walking and joined Mr. Fitzwater on his daily mile walk down a nearby country road — occasionally with Tiger along to form a trio.

So friendly did this grouse become that when Sarah's brother came to put a screen on the basement door and laid his hammer down, Nuisance came and sat on the handle to watch him work.

For almost a year, Nuisance the grouse would come when Sarah would call from the edge of the woods. Although he hasn't come for some time now, Sarah continues to look daily from her kitchen window.

As these stories show, the usually wary grouse can be an unpredictable and often friendly creature.

A bird that William Snow termed "our friendly neighborhood grouse," first appeared when Mr. Snow stopped at the end of his road to pick up the mail one day in March. Apparently fascinated by the Snow's station wagon, the grouse flew at the car and later chased it down the road. Hoping to get a photo of this overtame bird, Mr. Snow walked to the mail box on several occasions with camera in hand — no grouse. However, when Mr. Snow drove to the mail box, out came the grouse. This type of behavior began in the middle of March and continued through the first week in April. By this time the female grouse had become quite agressive and made her final appearance on Easter Sunday. At this time she had to be moved from the road by Mr. Snow who walked behind her brushing at her tail feathers to make her move along.

Perhaps like many people of above average intelligence the grouse is eccentric on occasion. Even though this king of game birds is considered to be very wary, there are certainly times when, grouse do the craziest things!

It Appears To Me

By Curly

. . . . A PERSON OUGHT TO HAVE ONE

Some right close friends of mine recently did some remodeling of their lovely home and I was more than somewhat impressed. . . . so much so that I want to share it with you. What these folks did was add a skylight to their living room. Not only did it light up the room but it also saved energy and added an aristocratic aura which just seemed to permeate the entire dwelling. Skylights are not new, of course, but lately they have experienced a rebirth, if you will. They come in a wide variety of forms and about a dozen and a half national manufacturers are currently making them in many different shapes and from an assortment of materials. If any of you are interested, you can get the lowdown on what is available free if you will take time to visit your local library. Drop in and ask to see the latest "Sweet's Architectural Catalogue File" or phone Sweet's customer service at their toll-free number 800/255-6880.

You know, it is not too early to start thinking about that trip you plan to make this next summer or in the spring, for that matter. Planning ahead is not only practical but it is downright fun as an anticipatory activity during these late winter months. I learned of a publication which I think might prove to be very useful to you also. It is entitled "Highway Assistance Telephone Directory" and it lists phone numbers for the Highway Patrol in cities throughout the United States. Sized conveniently to slip into the glove compartment, the booklet is free by sending a self-addressed (Stamped) legal sized envelope to Trace Printers, Box 105, Ridgeland, Mississippi 39157.

OK. . . . tax time is almost upon us and that could mean a headache or two is in the offing. Well sir, up in Boston at the University Hospital the folks got to thinking about "hurtin heads" and they not only

considered the tax time tension headache but all shapes and sizes of the cantankerous critters. I reckon it is only natural for a body to come down with one, now and again, but like any ailment that persists, a "hanging-on" or frequently occurring headache is nothing to fool with and should be checked out carefully. You can get a free copy of "Headache, The Oldest Enemy" by requesting it from the Office of Information Services, University Hospital, 75 East Newton St. in Boston, Massachusetts 02118.

. . . . FOR YOUR BOOK SHELF

Dr. Bob Giles, Jr. from up at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg has authored a hard-backed 400 pager entitled *Wildlife Management* which I predict will, or should, become part of a good many personal and professional libraries. Although it was primarily designed to assist faculty members in the teaching of beginning college courses in wildlife management, it contains an abundance of information which will be useful to anyone who is even remotely interested in wildlife and fisheries. As a matter of fact Bob states in his preface ". . . . this text is also expected to be helpful in career guidance, in improving citizen involvement in environmental projects, and in increasing appreciation of the wildlife resource and its social and environmental milieu. I trust it will be useful to commissioners and public decision makers, land use planners, and, in general, people who love the outdoors." *Wildlife Management* sells for $20.00 and it is available from W. H. Freeman and Company, 660 Market Street, San Francisco, California 94104 and from book stores here and there.

I was born and raised in Minnesota and although for many years I have had an on-going love affair with the state of Virginia, from time to time reminders of the "Nord Contree" tug at my heart-strings. Not long ago this phenomenon occurred again as the result of a book written by one of this country's leading interpreters of wilderness . . . Sigurd F. Olson. He has written profusely about the land of lakes and the Boundary Waters of Minnesota and Canada in such books as *The Singing Wilderness*, *The Lonely Land* (some eight in all) but his *Reflections From The North Country* really got to me. As a matter of fact I am certain that any of you that "paddle your own canoe" or would like to, will experience a familiar chill up your spine and get a whiff of pungent wood smoke when you read it. He tells about things as they are, for example, the foreword to his chapter called "Frontiers" reads, "We dream of times when there was room to breathe, work to challenge our strength and courage, a chance for a man to carve out his destiny" or the beginning of the essay on "Tradition," "My two old canoes are works of art embodying the feeling of all canoemen for rivers and lakes and the wild country they were built to traverse. They were made in the old tradition when there was time and love of the work itself." I calculate that you will love and cherish *Reflections From The North Country*. It is illustrated by Les Kouba and is available from Alfred Knopf, New York, New York for $8.95.

. . . . AND THEN

"There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other that heat comes from the furnace." Aldo Leopold.

Growing Up Outdoors

BY SANDY COLEMAN

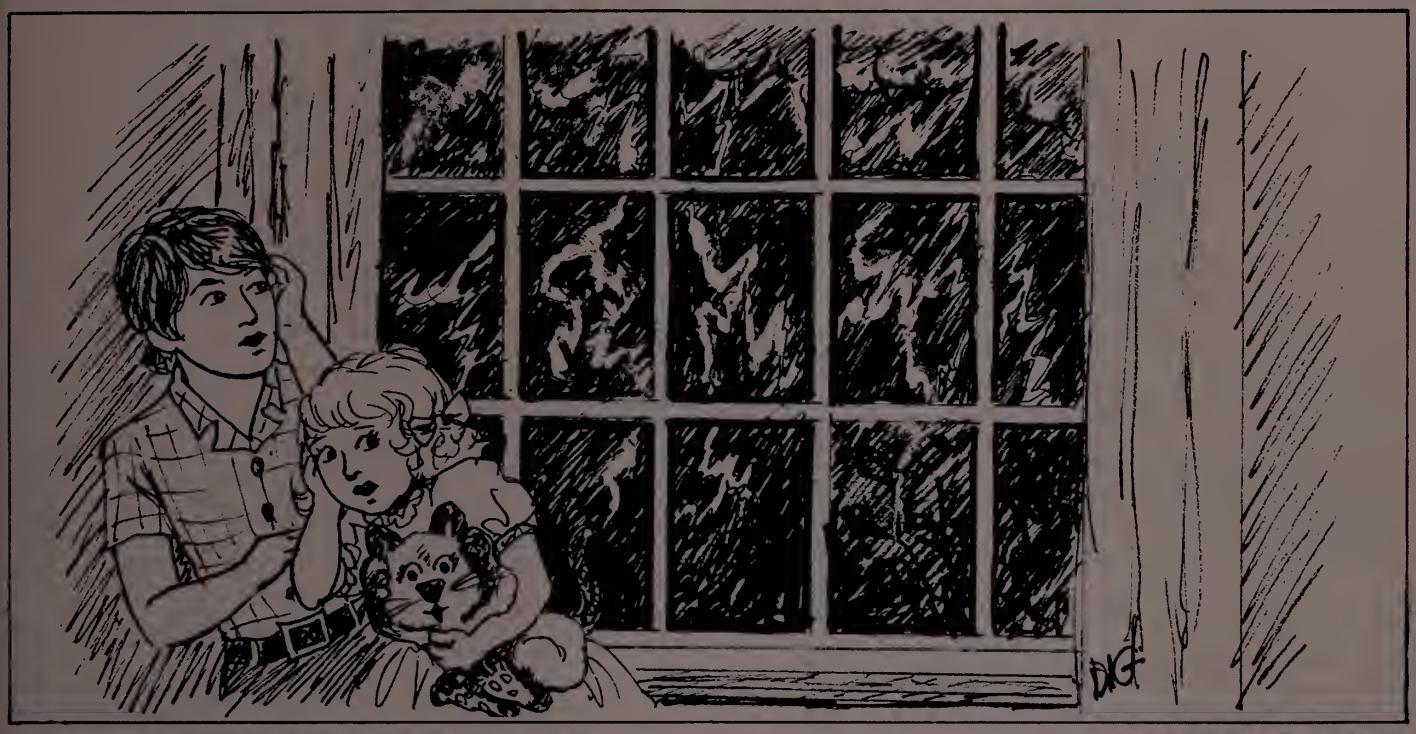


Illustration by Diane Grant

THUNDERSTORMS

Matt and Amy listened to the rumbling of distant thunder.

"Well, I think we better go inside, Amy," Matt said to his younger sister. Amy quickly gathered up her toy trucks and ran with Matt to the safety of their home.

"I hate thunderstorms," Amy said with great feeling. "Lightning is about the scariest thing I know. I just want to get in bed and hide my eyes under the covers."

"Well, I don't like them either. But, you know, maybe if we knew more about them, then we wouldn't be so frightened. Want to look it up?"

"Well, I guess so."

The brother and sister were happy in the den, a room with no windows — something that made Amy very happy during the storm raging outside. Matt poured over several books, checking to see what he could find out about thunder and lightning.

"Well," said Matt. "It's not very easy to understand. Let me try to explain it to you, though. Warm air is driven up to where the cumulus clouds form. Rain and snow begin to fall within the cloud and a layer of ice is formed. Somehow, this forms a thunderstorm and lightning begins. Thunder is the explosion of air when it is heated by a lightning stroke. See, it doesn't sound so bad." Amy, holding Rover her kitten, nodded.

"Still, I know that you can be struck by lightning. And Mom always tells us to stay away from trees and to run to the house when there is a thunderstorm, so there must be something to be afraid of!"

"Well, it says here that is true. But there are some safety rules that you can follow to be sure that you're all right where there is a thunderstorm."

"What are they?" Amy asked.

"It says first, when you think there is going to be a thunderstorm, which you can tell by the presence of the anvil-shaped dark clouds and possibly the distant sound of thunder, to get inside a building if it is at all possible. It is also safe inside a car. If you are caught outside, do not stand underneath a tree or a telephone pole. Don't stand too far above the land, like if you were standing alone on the top of a hill. Stay away from metal equipment, especially things like bikes, wire fences, clotheslines, metal pipes and rails. It is also a good idea to stay away from open water."

"So, if we go in the house and don't do any of those things if we're caught outside, then we really don't have anything to be afraid of," Amy put down the kitten and watched her big brother replace the books on the shelf. The sound of thunder could be heard.

"You know," Matt looked at his little sister, "lightning might be pretty. Want to go look out the window?"

Amy looked rather apprehensively at Matt as he began to walk towards the living room. "Well. . . "

Amy and Rover followed Matt and soon the three were looking out the window watching one of nature's incredible feats. The lightning flashed and the thunder rumbled.

"You know," Amy said reflectively, "maybe thunderstorms aren't so bad after all."

"Yeah, I think so too," Matt answered. "As long as you know the safety rules and follow them, then thunderstorms can't hurt you."

"Hey, I have an idea!" Amy shouted. "We could pretend we were in a haunted house. . . "

Matt just smiled.

DONALD E. ZEPP, PROPRIETOR

Photos by Mark S. Von Wehrden

BY RUSTY DENNEN

Donald E. Zepp of King George will tell you that his job is for the birds. But he wouldn't have it any other way.

Zepp, 55, is supervisor of Land's End Wildlife Refuge on the Rappahannock — a 412-acre tract of land which some 30,000 wild Canada geese call home every winter.

With its open fields and craggy cliffs overhanging the river, Land's End is one place beer cans haven't invaded, and where deer can be seen on the roadside most any evening.

It looks like most other farms, but sounds make the difference. The geese: you can hear them long before you get there. One visitor remarked: "It's like a thousand people talking in a small room."

Zepp spends most of the summer and fall planting and harvesting corn and soybeans, about 100 acres each, to be used in feeding. Other crops grown on the farm, such as millet, beans, rye, crimson clover are sent to other Game Commission operated wildlife management areas. The grain is stored in elevators and spread by tractor on the fields.

Today, Zepp is returning from the chore of feeding the feathered hordes.

A red tractor coughs one last time and rolls to a stop in the barn. Zepp, wearing smudged green overalls and a white hard hat, descends from the seat.

Fawn, a six-month-old adopted deer, ambles over to greet him. "Whew," he exclaims with a glance at the field. "They eat that corn faster'n I can put it out there."

"Back in September, those geese out there came from the Canadian tundra — down the Atlantic Flyway. Some of 'em probably even came down the Ohio Valley before they ended up here," a trip which he says spans weeks and several thousand miles.

According to Zepp, who was a game warden in King George for 19 years, Land's End is one of two dozen wildlife management areas in the state operated by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries.

And although it is one of the smallest, its impact on the waterfowl population wintering in Virginia is immense. More geese spend the winter here than at any other state maintained reserve, he says.

"Attracting the geese and keeping them here during the winter months is my job," Zepp says. The success or failure of that venture affects state waterfowl management practices and a multi-million dollar hunting industry.

Yet, Land's End is one of the least known refuges in the state Zepp says. "Some long-time county residents don't even know what we're doing down here."

That may be because there are few signs identifying the refuge — and because it is not open to the public

although tours and visits can be arranged by calling in advance.

Land's End was established in 1967 when J. R. Davis donated 197 acres of his farm to the Game Commission, which in 1970 acquired an additional 225 acres from the adjoining William Spillman farm. Zepp is the third superintendent.

"Fifteen years ago there were very few geese in this area. Those that did come left within a few weeks to better food supply and less hunting pressure down south," said Zepp.

But modern game management techniques now under way at Land's End have changed all that. Now there are three different varieties of Canada geese, along with an occasional snow goose. Mallard ducks, gadwalls, mergansers and scaup also abound in the adjoining creeks.

The first flights of geese arrive in late September — and if the food supply is sufficient, they can be enticed to stay until late March.

The success of Land's End; therefore, depends upon its ability to offer shelter and food — two things which Zepp admits are sore points with many area hunters.

There is no hunting allowed at Land's End or within 1,000 yards of the property line. And hunters complain that the geese are being fed at Land's End when they should be allowed to feed on surrounding fields.

The purpose of the refuge, Zepp says, is to attract enough birds to maintain a healthy population and to improve waterfowl hunting.

Allowing too many geese to congregate without hunting pressure would be a disaster for farmers along the river. Zepp explained that geese have a peculiar habit that gets farmers mad. "They graze on small grains just like cattle. A flock can strip a wheatfield bare on a moonlit night."

Geese, Zepp says, are like sandtraps to the golfer, "They can really frustrate you. Just when you think you've got them figured out, they do something completely different."

He told the story of one group of hunters to illustrate his point. "They watched the geese every morning to see where they were flying. Sure enough, the morning they went out to hunt, the geese flew a different way." And he added with a chuckle, "Geese have probably been cussed at more than any other game animal I know of."

And they're smart, too. "When I turn the grain elevator on they know they're going to be fed . . . that's the dinner-bell."

The geese, he says, also know who their friends are. "They know me by my hat. I can drive right through them on the tractor and they don't get upset. But let a stranger walk up in the field and they're gone."

L. Gildea
'78

To the Hounds!

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY LEE GILDEA

Long before the sun touches the frosty bluegrass, the big columned house in the grove of oaks and ancient hickories is bustling. Breakfast is hurried. White stocks are tied precisely and flecks of dust flicked from immaculate top-boots. The coat of scarlet "pink" settles comfortably on wide shoulders. In the stable beyond, man with the smell of fine leather, a big thoroughbred horse paces restlessly in deep straw, ignoring his breakfast. The more practical pony in the next stall munches steadily at his feed. He may need it before the day is done.

A summer thunderstorm passes, its rumbling dying away over the flatwoods to the east, and in the golden twilight that follows a rambling old farmhouse rattles with anticipation. Someone is filling the thermos jugs while another rummages through the closet in search of gum boots and time-proved britches. A voice inquires in piercing tones as to who had the flashlight last. There is talk of a full moon and a young moon in a hundred cows contrived, and of puppies to be wormed.

At "daik-dark" of a damp fall night a dim figure steps out to the rickety porch of a weathered little house at the top of a red mud ridge. He strikes a rank smelling match to light a kerosene lantern, and in the sudden glow his face is lined and weathered, his denim jacket worn and faded. There he ramble down an old cowhorn with a rawhide strap, and blows half a dozen sweet, mournful notes, and from here and countless other farms under the hollow moon come lithe, active shadows, answering the hour with music even sweeter than the horn.

The three settings differ widely but in each household the excitement and anticipation are the same. For in the background a pack of foxhounds is "tuning up," knowing their hour is near. Perhaps they are a hunt club pack, twenty couple of hounds as uniform as a troop of soldiers and as well disciplined. Perhaps they are a score or so of Walkers or Goodmans or Julys, lean tough individuals united only in the competition of the chase. Perhaps they are only a handfull of "fox dogs," of unknown pedigree and uncertain maintenance, but "jus' let-en git im smellin' sweet, and if they don't make im climb, dig, or die, for God I'll give em to you."

Somewhere out in the misty fields and thickets the object of the whole commotion goes about his business unconcerned. A little, furry, graceful fellow not much bigger than a house cat, he seems hopelessly outmatched. Centuries of knowledge and fortunes of money have gone to produce the hounds soon to be cast against him. The huntsmen, most of them, have untold hours of hunting to guide them; indeed the best of them have a combination of knowledge and experience and intuition that amounts to pure genius. Yet far more often than not the fox will join in the sport so long as it suits him, and then leave the whole show flat-footed, grinning at each other and feeling slightly foolish. For it is a fact that an adult, healthy fox fairly hunted with hounds on his home ground stands little danger of being caught. He knows his own territory intimately, and being a keen scented hunter himself, he knows the conditions that make for poor scenting and is quick enough to take advantage of them. Stories of

his tricks will keep a gathering of foxhunters swapping tales all night. If all else fails him, in most of his range there is a groundhog hole every few hundred yards. The fact that a fox will run before hounds for hours, passing by dozens of the refuges, argues strongly that he is, if not actually enjoying the chase, at least not much worried about it.

There are two distinct types of foxes in Virginia. The gray fox *(Urocyon cineroargenteus)* is the native fox of the Southern woodlands, and a lover of thickets and grown-up places. Like Brer Rabbit, he was "bred and born in the briar patch", and so long as he is in it he is content to trust his wits to save his hide, doubling and dodging within a small area.

A fox can provide more hours of sport, with less danger to himself, than any other hunted animal known.

The red fox *(Vulpes fulva)* on the other hand, is a foreigner, imported from England into the colonies of New York and Maryland in the early 1700's. He is a creature of the wide open spaces, the open woods and the farmland, and when hunted puts his trust in his speed and endurance, resorting to tricks only when pressed to the point of weariness.

As the red fox migrated southward and westward, he caused considerable consternation among the local hunters, who found that their old stock of hounds, accustomed to trailing a dodging gray fox track by track were soon "left at the post" by the faststepping newcomer. Then began the great tradition of hound breeding in America as men like Dr. T. Y. Henry in Virginia, George Birdsong in Georgia, Haiden Trigg, the Maupins and the Walkers in Kentucky searched both Europe and America for hounds to upgrade their stock until they could hold their own in a red fox chase. Their successes provided a solid foundation for modern breeders, and their famous hounds of a century or more ago are remembered as the founders of their kind.

As foxhunting evolved in America, two more or less distinct traditions developed, and to some extent they developed around the two types of foxes Where the countryside permitted good galloping and jumping, and finances permitted good horses, the red fox was hunted in the true English tradition, with all due formality and ritual. In rougher country and leaner circumstances, the horse was often dispensed with entirely. The sport boiled down to the elemental contest between fox and hounds, and to a lesser degree to the competition between the hounds themselves, which is the basis of field trials. Here the gray fox is often the favorite, as his shorter runs keep the race in hearing. But there is much overlapping and a shading to suit every hunter. A fortunate few have both the means and the elastic tastes to enjoy the best of the sport in all its many forms. But in general the man with several thousand dollars worth of thoroughbred hunter getting cold and fidgety under him will miss the true beauty of a pack of hounds working a gray fox who spends half a day tiptoeing circles in a forty acre open patch, and the country cousin who has trekked [illegible] to the top of a ridge on a doddy [illegible], [illegible] rock to sit on, and build a fire for company, will definitely have words to describe the old [illegible] who takes his hounds away across the mountain out of hearing, to return for brief intervals twice during the night and go to ground at daybreak ten miles away, leaving an exhausted pack to drift [illegible] the next couple of days.

The differences in the two traditions are mainly those of preference and degree. There are few things in this world that can compare with galloping a really good horse that understands and enjoys hounding across a beautiful stretch of open country on a crisp morning, with snatches of music flowing back from a pack in full cry a field ahead. But one of those comparable things is to stand motionless on a damp warm night and listen to another pack sweeping [illegible] far away, now roaring past your very feet, driving a tough old gray back and forth through the summer woods. There is an air of beauty and elegance about fine horses that nothing else can really match. Yet the more attention you give to horses the less you have for the hounds. What seems at a glance to be a kaleidoscope of colors and sizes and waving tails is a collection of individuals as different as people, each with its strengths and weaknesses. The combining of such a group into an efficient hunting unit, or pack, must be one of the most fascinating and frustrating pursuits that ever occurred to the mind of man. The organized approach to it is to breed cooperative hounds, each individual doing his bit for the good of the pack. The other method is to breed competitive hounds, each individual driving for the front, and then try to assemble individuals near enough in ability to play together. Neither way is dull.

So it is a thing of paradoxes, this foxhunting. Men may enjoy it in many ways, but it refuses to abide by man-made rules. Maybe it is all that is left of an age before man's weapons gave him the power to make the rules, when magic and ritual were still essential to the success of the hunt. Here for a bit, man and hound, hound and fox, can revert to play the game once more by an older set of rules, loosely written to include all things. Here for once, man and animal alike succeed or fail according to their individual abilities. That, I believe, is why in this day of highways and railroads, woven wire and steel traps, a hunter is still compelled to raise one more litter of soft eared, bay eyed hound pups and send them forth to their glory or their doom.

Perhaps the greatest paradox of all is that, in this punched and numbered and computerized age, men spend long and strenuous hours and thousands beyond their means in pursuit of a little animal that they don't really want to catch anyway. Now that our survival does not depend on the hunt, we can pursue the game for its own sake, for the fun of it. This is the peculiar beauty of foxhunting. That is, it can provide more hours of sport for more people, young and old, rich and poor, black and white, with less danger to himself than any other hunted animal in the world.

Outdoor Notebook

You Can't Train A Wild Stag!

Most people consider television commercials a bore. One of the notable exceptions, however, almost didn't get made simply because it was impossible. Or so they said. Yet today millions are fascinated by a wild stag parading across TV screens.

And, of all things, doing a commercial. Docilely, and with class.

"It took work — many months of it — and endless patience," says trainer Earl Hammond, who has worked with many kinds of animals.

The particular animal needed to match the insurance company's well-known trademark had to have a full and imposing "rack" of horns.

"A real deer doesn't begin to look like the pictured stag until late summer, and the mating season extends through the fall months, not the best time to deal with him. You can't train an animal like that in the rutting season, but you can condition him."

This trainer knew his animals, since he had grown up on his father's elk ranch in Nebraska, and also was in the business of providing exotic animals for television commercials.

"We looked through three states for the right deer," he says, "and finally found a fine European red deer in Tennessee. We took many films in order to present the idea to the executives who had the final say. But the concept and pictures met with enthusiasm."

Viewers see the impressive stag trotting down streets, climbing porch steps, pushing a child's bike and peering in windows. For these shots, story lines had to be written and months of training and filming set up.

"Nature had already slapped a deadline on the proceedings, since the months from the time of approval until the animal would lose its antlers. Meantime, he had to be conditioned to actually walk up and down steps, look in windows and so on. Before that, he had to learn to get along with men, since he was, and still is, a wild animal."

There was no intention of domesticating the stag or changing him in any way, so it was the stag that called the shots. There were several weeks when it seemed as though the whole project was impossible. The trainer and his helpers grew to know the stag's every expression and finally to establish a suitable reward system in order to get their work done.

"We tried just about everything. We even bought some expensive alfalfa, but nothing seemed to please him. Finally, we discovered he really enjoyed just two things — apples and corn. After that, it was easy."

A method was established by first letting the stag eat whenever he wanted and as much as he wanted. Then this amount was cut down and spread over a day, the same amount of food, but all of it during the time when he was working.

"We placed this food at various points on the sets — some on the steps to the porch-platform, more on the doorknob and hinges. A tricycle seat was modified to hold food under a cover making the stag appear to be pushing it as he nibbled the food inside. All this was only possible after he had learned to trust in us — that we wouldn't hurt him — and the food."

The stag commercial has been one of the most successful on the networks.—*Duane Valentry*

Sub Policies

Ever wonder why you didn't get your *Virginia Wildlife* when you expected it?

When you subscribe to *Virginia Wildlife* it takes from six to eight weeks to get your name and address into our computers, so there may be a month's delay before you receive your first magazine. For instance, if you mailed in your subscription on March 16, May would be the first issue that you receive. The six to eight week delay also applies when you send in your change of address.

When you do file a change of address with us, we must have your old address, as well as your new one — and, please, don't forget the zip code! The post office requires that we use zip codes when mailing magazines.

If you wish to order something additionally besides *Virginia Wildlife*, please send separate checks. For example, if you wish to order a copy of *Virginia's White-Tailed Deer*, please make one check payable for $3.00 and another check for your *Virginia Wildlife* subscription.

A one year subscription now costs $3.00. Three year subscriptions are available at the bargain rate of $7.50. Ten or more subscriptions are available at the group rate of $2.50 each, in other words, 10 subscriptions cost $22.50.

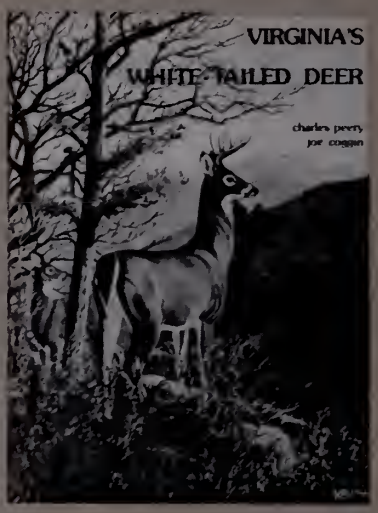
If you wish to subscribe, see your game warden or send in the form found in the pages of *Outdoor Notebook*.

All About Deer

Just what do you know about the white-tailed deer?

It is the most hunted, most popular game animal in Virginia. Photographers and nature lovers seek him as enthusiastically as the sportsman.

Game biologists Charles Peery and Joe Coggin, authors of *The Wild Turkey in Virginia*, have set down their research and findings in the new publication, *Virginia's White-Tailed Deer*. Aided with research from other Game Commission personnel, the two have compiled an intensive and thorough history of the deer, from his thin beginnings on through the present abundance enjoyed today because of modern game management practices. Methods of deer hunting are examined and evaluated along with a run-down of county-by-county deer harvest statistics. The book is a must for the deer hunter, as well as the student of wildlife.

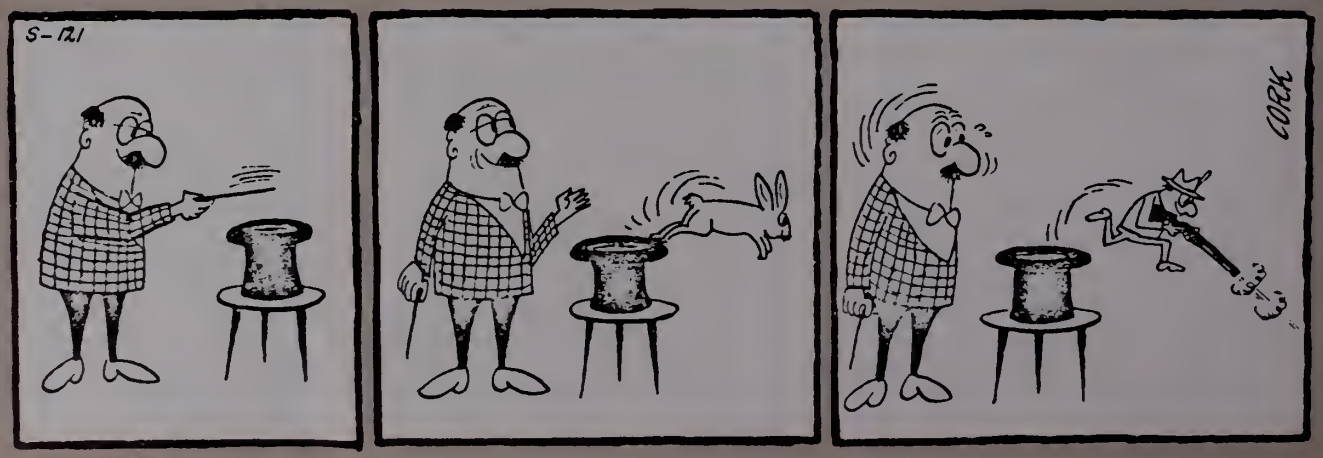


The book, beautifully illustrated in full color, is available for $3.00 by writing to: Virginia Game Commission, Deer Book — ON, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, Virginia, 23230. Please make checks payable to Treasurer of Virginia.

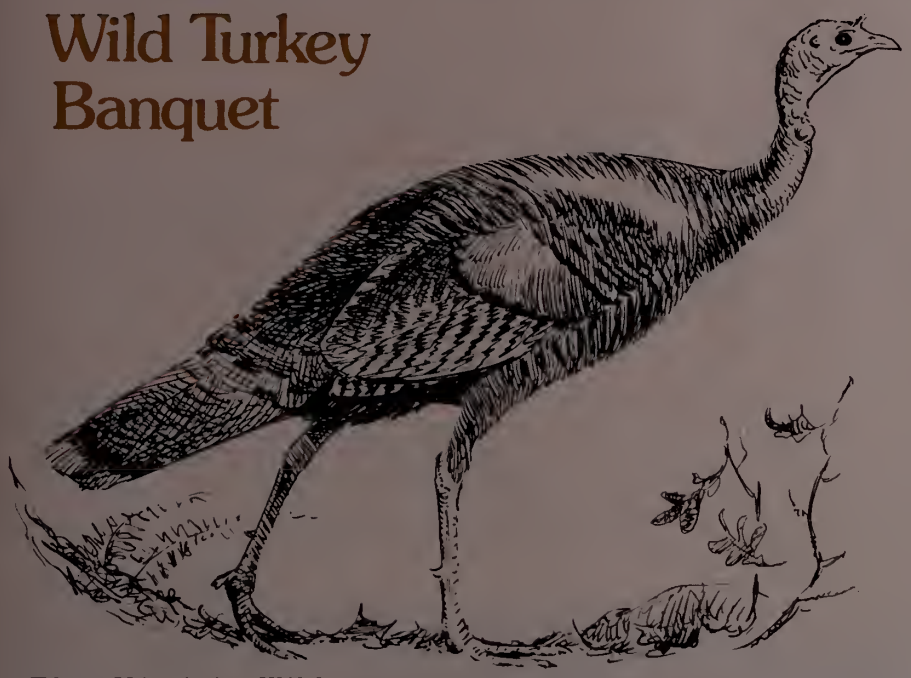
Record Deer Harvest

The Game Commission has stated that 1978-79 was a record year for deer hunting with a total of 71,952 deer harvested compared to the total for the 1977-78 season, which was 67,059. The eastern kill was 51,008 for an increase of 1,911 over last year. The western kill was 20,944 compared to 17,962 for the 1977-78 season.

Sixty-eight counties recorded higher numbers of deer harvested, 29 were lower and one county remained the same. The counties recording the highest number of animals harvested were: Southampton 3,093; Buckingham 2,082; Rockingham 2,024; Amelia 2,001; Bath 1,973; Caroline 1,932 and Powhatan with 1,866.



Wild Turkey Banquet



The Virginia Wild Turkey Federation has announced that its 1979 Spring Banquet will be held at the Holiday Inn Central (The Abby) on Sunday afternoon March 25, 1979 in Richmond.

Featured speaker at the event will be Roger Latham. Roger is currently the outdoor writer for the Pittsburg Press and the author of numerous books and articles on turkey hunting and calling. Formerly the head of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Wildlife Research Unit, Dr. Latham did much of the original research on restoration of the wild turkey in that area.

Tickets for this event are $10.00 and are available from Tom Diggs, 1924 Esquire Road, Richmond, Virginia 23234. All checks should be made payable to the Virginia Wild Turkey Federation.

"Outdoor Virginian"

Those who love the outdoor life have one more publication directed towards their interests. The *Outdoor Virginian* covers monthly outdoor activities of Virginia natives. The magazine features reports from staff members located in all parts of the Commonwealth. Copies of the magazine are available now at most sporting goods stores, but to save the trip — why not subscribe yourself? The yearly cost is $12 and subscriptions are available by writing to the *Outdoor Virginian*, P.O. Box 34286, Richmond, Virginia, 23234. Editor Larry Waldron indicates that he welcomes suggestions from readers, so this might be your chance to tell the world about your favorite hunting or fishing trip!

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WATER SKIING "LOOKING GOOD"

Ask the average buyer of a new boat or motor why he's buying, and chances are he'll say he wants it for water skiing.

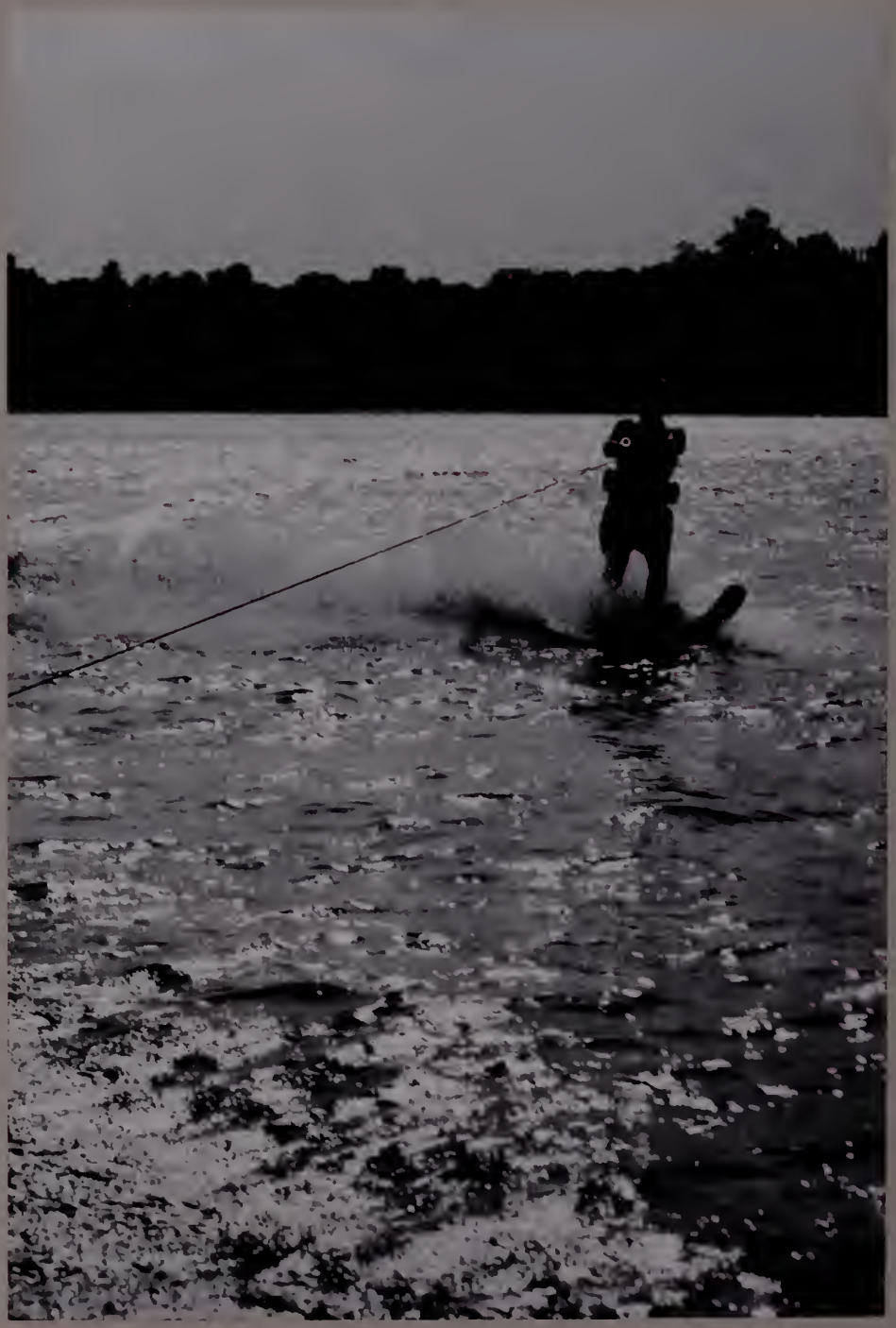
Statisticians are puzzled over these survey results, since many of the boats and motors being purchased by these respondents just wouldn't be capable of towing water skiers. In many instances, it's a case of wishful thinking on the part of the younger members of the family, plus the fact that the sport looks attractive to just about any boat buyer.

Given the right boat, however, the outlay for water skiing equipment is considerably less than it would be for fishing tackle or skin diving gear. The "right boat" is one capable of hitting 30 m.p.h. or so. A boat that doesn't have that kind of top speed probably wouldn't be able to produce the initial surge of speed necessary to yank an adult skier up out of the water.

The combination of a ski tow bar, tow rope and skis can cost as little as $100.00, or you can pay up to $100.00 for a single, high quality slalom ski. Once you've got the proper equipment:

- Learn from a good water ski instructor.
- Know how to swim, but wear a ski belt or jacket in any event.
- Have a backward-facing observer in the boat at all times.
- Keep away from swimming areas, other boats, fishermen, docks, etc.
- Clasp both hands overhead after a fall to let the boat driver know you're OK.
- If you're skiing in a heavily-traveled boating area, hold up a ski to warn other boats away.
- Learn new maneuvers progressively.

Like learning to ride a bike, getting started is the most difficult part about water skiing. Once the novice skier gets up, the fear gives way to elation--it's as much fun as it looks! And, like bicycle riding, you never forget how once you've done it.



"In Nature's Garden"

Called After

BY ELIZABETH MURRAY

Illustrated by Lucile Walton

Fame takes strange turns. In the world of botany, it is usually considered an honor to have a plant named for you; but in the case of the Virginia dayflower, *Commelina virginica*, the honor was a little mixed. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there were, in Holland, three Commelin brothers who were all botanists. Two of them were distinguished and well-known. Jan Commelin was the founder of the Amsterdam Botanical Garden and worked with one of his brothers to make it one of the most important in Europe. The third brother never amounted to much and died young. The bloom of the Virginia dayflower has three petals, two large, rounded, highly colored (blue) ones and a smaller, greenish, lower petal. It was Linnaeus' scientific joke to call this plant after the Commelin brothers. I think it was rather a cruel joke and I am glad the third Commelin brother was dead before the nomenclature was published in *Species Plantarum* in 1753.

Without the joke, there could be no objection to lending one's name to the dayflower, for it is an attractive plant. It is a monocotyledon, belonging to the spiderwort family, Commelinaceae. The two conspicuous petals are bright blue, a color described by an admiring early botanical writer as being "an impressive blue, that one will always remember as being distinctly apart from the general run of floral blues"! There are six stamens, three sterile with cruciform anthers and three, longer, fertile ones recurved at the ends. The stamens surround a single, central pistil. The smooth stem is juicy, much branched and rather weak so that the whole plant sprawls along the ground. It is jointed, giving it a zig-zag appearance and often takes root at the joints. The alternate leaves are narrow and lance-shaped forming sheathing bases where they join onto the stem.

Dayflower is common in moist, shaded soils throughout its range from New Jersey to Florida and west to Illinois, Missouri and Kansas. The common name refers to the fact that the flower only opens for a day, a morning really, after which it does not exactly wither so much as disintegrate into a sticky pulp (a situation which was quite provoking to Miss Walton when she was painting it!). Dayflower is frequently found in waste places, round old buildings and farms and along roadsides, coming into bloom in midsummer and flowering on through the fall.

The naming of a close cousin of the dayflower, *Tradescantia* or spiderwort, was much more straightforward. John Tradescant the elder was gardener to King Charles I of England, and, more importantly from our point of view, to Charles' queen, Henrietta Maria who was known as the 'rose and lily queen' from her love of gardens. Tradescant travelled widely in search of new and interesting plants to bring back to English gardens. Although there is no record that he ever came to America, seeds of the flower which bears his name were sent to him, along with a great many other Eastern American plants, by relatives in the Virginia colony. His son, John Tradescant the younger, also a great horticulturist and traveller, did come to Virginia in 1637, 1642 and 1654 and he was granted "headrights" to some land on the York River. Both he and his father made extensive collections of everything they could lay their hands on during their travels and anything which other travellers would bring them. Their collection was assembled at the Tradescant home in South Lambeth, London and formed one of the first real museums of the country, known familiarly as the Ark. During the Commonwealth, with Oliver Cromwell in charge of the country, there was a dearth of opportunity for royal gardeners, and Tradescant the younger lived off the proceeds of his museum. At his death the collection passed, after some highly questionable legal maneuvering, into the hands of Elias Ashmole who used it as the basis for the founding of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

Through the efforts of the Tradescants, many Virginia plants became established in England; Virginia creeper, swamp cypress, cardinal flower, red maple, wild asters (called Michaelmas daisies when cultivated) and of course the one that bears their name, spiderwort. *Tradescantia virginiana* is another ephemeral flower, lasting only for a day or less. It is a larger plant than the dayflower and more able to stand erect on its stems which may be as much as two to three feet tall. Even if there were only two famous Tradescants, there are three petals on their flower, all alike and usually a rich deep more purplish blue than the dayflower's color. There are also occasional white and pink forms. Six fertile stamens surround a central style. Spiderwort comes out in the spring, quite a bit earlier than the dayflower, and blooms into midsummer. It is found in woods, thickets and along roadsides, and seems to flourish particularly well along the road that leads up to Mountain Lake in the southwest part of the state.

Tradescantia is an important plant scientifically and cytogenetical research concerned with its chromosomes has been carried out for years in the Botany Department at Oxford and in many other laboratories. So even if the museum at Oxford is not the Tradescantian Museum, as perhaps it fairly should be, the name of the Tradescants is well known to scientists, as well as to all wildflower lovers.

BY JOHN W. TAYLOR

Bird of the Month

The Hermit Thrush

The painting on the opposite page shows the hermit thrush in its northern breeding grounds. Only there, in the land of spruce-mirrored lakes, can the bird be fully known and appreciated. For it is only there that it is in full song — a song so exquisite, so soul-stirring, that many believe it the finest of any North American species.

It is a song incredibly pure in tone and with an indescribable sweetness of modulation, with a haunting, spiritual quality that seems to verge on another, higher realm of being. Heard close at hand, there are soft overtones, mere whispers, that seem to emanate from several directions at once. Often one is surprised to find that there is but one singer.

Add to all of this the mystery of twilight. At dusk, the hermit is in full chorus. Listen to them in the gathering darkness — the last light of day lingering on the horizon!

Usually there is a single introductory note, followed by a series of phrased tones, spiralling upward or descending gradually. Each phrase-like series is on a different pitch, and each is preceded by its own introductory note, as if singing the same song in different keys.

As mentioned, the hermit thrush can be heard at its best only on its breeding territory, which in one of its seven races, covers most of the northern part of the continent. The eastern form breeds chiefly from Manitoba and Quebec, south to Minnesota, Michigan and Massachusetts. Scattered populations are found on Long Island and along the Appalachian chain.

Among these latter are individuals nesting in the higher elevations of West Virginia and Maryland. So they should, where there is suitable habitat, cross the state-line into Virginia. Hermits have been heard singing in Highland County in June and July (when they should be nesting), but as yet there is no proof of nesting within the state.

Mr. Charles E. Stevens of Charlottesville heard them near Locust Spring Shelter (near Route 250) in 1964 and 1965. He writes: "I feel that the best chance of finding the hermit thrush breeding in Virginia would be in spending enough time at the Locust Spring Shelter so that one could listen at dawn and dusk in the nearby red pine and other coniferous stands in order to locate any birds."

(Should any reader know of any such investigations, or more recent reports, the information would be gratefully received by the author.)

In winter, most Virginians have the chance to see the hermit thrush, if not to hear it. Among the hardiest of the thrushes, it remains in these latitudes throughout the colder months. Common in most parts of Tidewater, where the season is milder, they become less frequent as one moves westward. By early April, most of them have moved back up north.

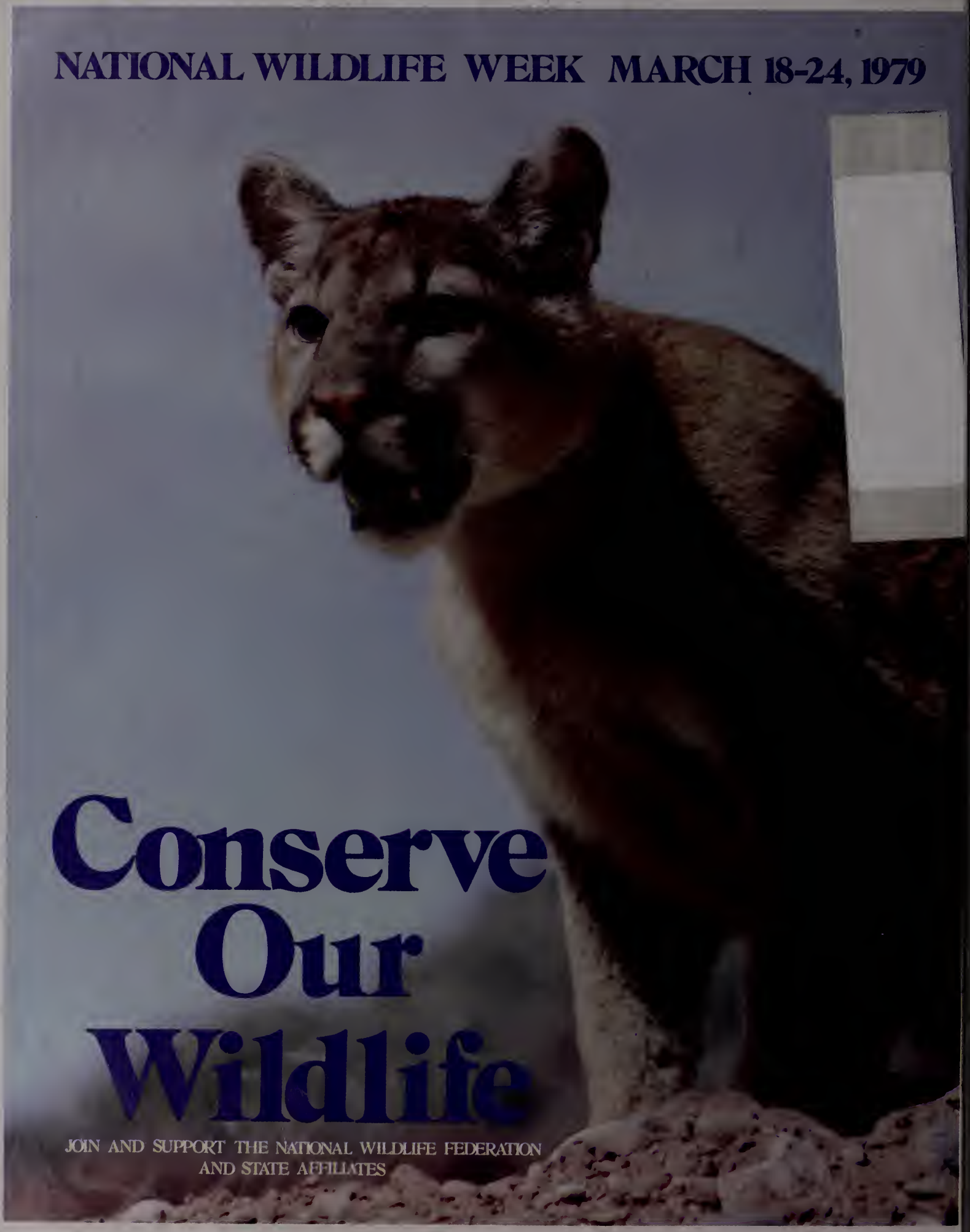
While in its winter haunts, this thrush subsists largely on berries. The fruits of holly, mistletoe, sumac and poison ivy are favored. Some animal matter is taken as well. I observed one, after an ice and snow storm, feeding on insect larvae, which it caught along the edge of a small stream. Wading in up to its breast feathers, it captured several large black grubs, slamming them on the ice to subdue them. This stretch of stream seemed the only spot not frozen or snow covered, so the bird's normal source of food was probably not available.

In summer, of course, a large percentage of the hermit's food is animal matter: insects, spiders, worms, and the like. Salamanders are also on the menu because of the thrush's attachment to wet, boggy woodlands. The young are also fed almost exclusively on animal matter, especially insects and larvae. Large morsels are minced first by the adults before being offered to the young.

The nest of the hermit is compact, like that of other thrushes, but may become quite large if bulky material is used. Unlike some of the other thrushes, however, no mud is used in construction. Instead, the interior is lined with pine needles and delicate plant fibers. The nest is usually situated on or near the ground in a grassy tussock or natural depression.

The hermit thrush is another of those species so beloved by the taxonomist. In addition to our eastern bird, there are six western forms, differing but slightly in size and coloration. And there has been a good bit of name changing. The original scientific name given by Linneaus was considered invalid, as was a later one given by Alexander Wilson. In 1921, an entirely new name and genus was established: *Hylocichla guttata.* Recent books list it as *Catharus guttata.*

NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK MARCH 18-24, 1979



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